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AUTHOR Ellis, Joseph; And Others
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ABSTRACT

In an effort to analyze the extent of and reasons for the exodus of teachers from teaching, this study collected and analyzed data from the Illinois State Board of Education for the school year 1979-80. The study, which excluded the Chicago Public Schools, compared statistics on teachers, administrators, and certified support personnel. Twelve reasons were identified to explain why educators leave the field. Results indicate that teachers and support personnel had similar dropout rates, which exceeded the dropout rate of administrators, and that the reasons for dropping out differed significantly between males and females. (Author/WD)

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A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF EDUCATOR DROP OUT IN ILLINOIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Joseph Ellis. Sherman Frey, Michael Thompson
Professors of Education
Northern Illinois University

On various occasions, news media have reported an exodus of teachers from teaching for a variety of reasons (e.g., low pay, "burn-out", etc.) Since professional personnel are the mainstay of the educational programs in the schools this exodus, if real, poses a threat to the continuity and quality of the educational programs delivered in our schools. Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to analyze data pertaining to the extent and reasons given by educators in one of the most populous states in the nation for leaving the profession. More specifically, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. To what extent do educators drop-out in the following categories: teachers, administrators, and support personnel?

2. To what extent do teachers drop-out by school level?

3. To what extent do regular teachers drop-out in comparison to special education teachers?

4. To what extent do administrators drop-out by classification of assignment?

5. To what extent do certified support personnel drop-out by classification of assignment?

6. What are the reasons given by administrators, teachers, and support personnel for leaving the profession? Do these reasons vary by sex?

Procedures. The data for this study were obtained from the records of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for the school year 1979-1980. These

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data did not include educational personnel from the Chicago Public Schools. The data were organized to indicate numbers and percents in various categories and statistically significant differences were determined by application of the chi-square technique and the difference between two (2) percentages.

For purposes of this study an educator drop-out was defined as an individual who has left the ranks of public education in Illinois according to the records of the Illinois State Board of Education. The category administrator included superintendents, principals, directors, business managers, supervisors, consultants, and coordinators. The category teacher included educators whose primary responsibility was in the classroom at levels kindergarten through twelve. The category support personnel included certified counselors, media and library personnel, speech correctionists, psychologists, social workers, and school nurses.

Results. In Table I the reader will find the incidence of educator drop-out by three areas of responsibility in Illinois public schools. It should be noted that teachers (8.6%) and support personnel (8.7%) had almost identical drop-out rates and these exceeded significantly ($X^2 = < .01$) the drop-out rate of administrators (5.8%).

Table I

Extent of Drop-outs of Various

Personnel in Illinois Public Schools (1979-1980)*

N = 103,626

Classification	Total	N	%	X^2
Teachers	87,238	7,544	8.6%	P is less than .01. There is less than one chance in one hundred that divergence in preferences to leave between groups can be explained as a sampling fluctuation. The differences between the observed and expected frequencies is significant.
Administrators	8,136	474	5.8%	
Support Personnel	8,252	717	8.7%	
TOTALS	103,626	8,735	8.4%	

*Not including the Chicago public schools.

The data present in Table II describes teacher drop-out rate by school level. A pattern of declining rate of drop-out emerges from high school (9.2%) through elementary (7.7%). Additionally the application of the chi-square test of significance establishes the significance of the differences (X^2 = < .01) between the elementary and the junior high and high school teachers.

Table II

The Extent of Teacher Drop-out in

Illinois Public Schools (1979-1980)*

N=75,138

School Level	Total	N	%	X^2
High School	26,848	2,471	9.2%	P is less than .01 . There is less than one chance in one-hundred that divergence in preferences to leave between groups can be explained as sampling fluctuations. The difference between observed and expected frequencies is significant.
Junior High School	11,253	1,019	9.1%	
Elementary School	37,037	2,843	7.7%	
TOTALS	75,138	6,333	8.4%	

*Not including Chicago public schools

Data which compare the drop-out rate of regular classroom and special education teachers are presented in Table III. The drop-out rate for regular classroom teachers (8.5%) differed significantly (Difference Between Two Percentages = < .01) from the rate of special education teachers (10.1%).

Table III

A Comparison of Teacher Drop-out Rates Between Regular Classroom and Special Education Teachers (1979-1980)*

N = 87,247

Classification	Total	N	%	The Significance of the Difference Between Two Percentages
Regular	78,406	6,650	8.5%	P is less than .01. There is less than one chance in one hundred that the divergence in choice between groups can be explained as a sampling fluctuation. The difference between the two group percentages is significant.
Special Education	8,841	894	10.1%	
TOTALS	87,247	7,544	9.6%	

*Not including the Chicago public schools.

An examination of the data presented in Table IV will indicate the extent to which Illinois public school educators in different kinds of school administrative positions dropped out of the education profession after the 1978-1979 school year. The percentage of drop-out for all 8,136 Illinois public school personnel classified as "administrators" was 5.8%

Superintendents of school districts had the highest percentage of drop-out when compared with assistant superintendents, principals, directors, business managers, and supervisors. However, they were exceeded in percentage of drop-out by consultants and coordinators. When these differences were analyzed by the X^2 test to determine their statistical significance, it was found that there is a significant difference between the five categories in terms of divergence of preference to leave.

TABLE IV

The Extent of Administrator Drop-Out

In Illinois Public Schools

Classification	Total	N	%	x^2
SUPERINTENDENT				
District Superintendent	989	83	8.4	
Assistant Superintendent and Administrative Assistant	610	27	4.4	
Sub-Total	1,599			
HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL				
Senior High School Principal	608	41	6.7	
Assistant Senior H.S. Principal	402	18	4.5	
Senior High School Dean	289	13	4.5	
	1,299			
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL				
Principal	433	19	4.3	
Assistant Principal	226	7	3.1	
Junior High School Dean	70	5	7.1	
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL				
Principal	2,014	90	4.5	
Assistant Principal	97	3	3.1	
	2,111			
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PERSONNEL				
Director	661	33	5.0	
Business Manager	188	12	6.4	
Supervisor	506	23	4.5	
Consultant	218	23	10.6	
Coordinator	815	77	9.4	
	2,388			
Totals	8,136	474	5.8	

P is less than .01. There is < 1 chance in 100 that divergence in preferences to leave between groups can be explained as sampling fluctuation. The differences between observed and expected frequencies is significant.

A study of the data reported in Table V will indicate the extent to which Illinois public school certified support personnel in seven different kinds of support positions dropped out of the education profession at the end of the 1978-1979 school year. The percentage of drop-outs for all 8,252 of the support personnel in Illinois public schools was 8.7%.

Social workers had the highest percentage of drop-outs (13.2%) when compared with school nurses, school psychologists, speech correctionists, librarian/media personnel and guidance counselors who had the lowest drop-out percentage (5.8%) among these seven groups. When the differences on drop-out percentages for these groups were analyzed by the x^2 test to determine statistical differences, it was found that there was a significant difference between the six categories in terms of divergence of perference to leave.

TABLE V

The Extent of Support Personnel

Dropout in Illinois Public Schools

Classification	Total	N	%	x^2
Guidance Counselor	2,285	133	5.8	P is less than .01. There is < 1 chance in 100 that divergence in preference to leave between groups can be explained as sampling fluctuations. The difference between observed and expected frequencies is significant.
Librarian/Media	1,982	143	7.2	
Speech Correctionist	1,520	183	12.0	
Psychologist	691	55	8.0	
Social Worker	760	100	13.2	
School Nurse	1,014	103	10.2	
Total	8,252	717	8.7%	

Table VI contains a summary of eleven reasons (plus other) reported by Illinois educators for leaving the profession. The reported reasons were compared in accordance to the following categories: (1) male-female administrators, (2) male-female teachers, and (3) male-female support personnel. A chi-square test of significance was computed to determine if there was a difference in the divergence of choice of reason for leaving by sex within the administration, teacher, and support personnel categories.

The results show that there was a significant difference at either the .05 or .01 level for 8 out of the 12 reasons reported by administrators, 9 out of 12 for teachers, and 8 out of 12 for support personnel. Those reasons showing a significant difference between sex by category also varied by category, however, this variance was negligible. For example: In administration, the following reasons showing a significant difference were: (A) in different Illinois schools, (B) in Illinois private schools, (C) in out-of-state system, (D) in other vocation, (G) domestic responsibilities, (H) death or ill, (I) retired, and (L) other.

Among teachers the following reasons showing a significant difference were: (A) in different Illinois schools, (C) in out-of-state system, (D) in other vocation, (F) returned to college, (G) domestic responsibilities. (H) death or Illness, (I) retired, (J) possible elimination, and (L) other.

For support personnel, the following reasons showing a significant difference were: (A) in different Illinois schools, (C) in out of state system, (D) in other vocation, (F) returned to college, (G) domestic responsibilities, (I) retired, (J) possible elimination and (L) other.

Again, while variance between categories of educators was found to be slight, a consistency of divergence of choice between males and females was quite evident. For two-thirds of the reasons in categories administrators and teachers, there were reported significant differences in divergence of choice

TABLE IV

A Comparison of the Reasons for Dropping Out Between Male and Female Administrators, Teachers, and Support Personnel

REPORTED REASONS	ADMINISTRATION						CHI SQUARE X^2	TEACHER						CHI SQUARE X^2	SUPPORT PERSONNEL						CHI SQUARE X^2
	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL			MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL			MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL		
	N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%	N	%	
*A. In different Illinois schools	33	.49	9	.64	42	.52	*<.05	149	.51	213	.37	362	.41	*<.01	16	.71	49	.82	65	.79	*<.01
B. In Illinois Private schools	9	.13	3	.21	12	.15	*<.05	52	.18	70	.12	122	.14	>.05	3	.13	10	.17	13	1.53	>.05
C. In Out of State System	54	.80	4	.28	58	.71	*<.01	233	.79	331	.57	564	.65	*<.01	28	1.23	68	1.14	96	1.16	*<.01
D. In Other Vocation	132	1.96	5	.36	137	.36	*<.01	925	3.15	376	.65	1301	1.49	*<.01	34	1.50	56	.94	90	1.09	*<.05
E. In Military Service	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	7	.02	1	.002	8	.009	>.05	1	.04	-	-	1	.01	>.05
F. Returned to College	9	.13	7	.50	16	.20	>.05	106	.36	164	.28	270	.31	*<.01	9	.40	25	.42	34	.41	*<.05
G. Domestic Responsibilities	1	.01	19	1.34	20	.24	*<.01	22	.07	1849	3.19	1871	2.14	*<.01	1	.04	155	2.59	156	1.89	*<.01
H. Death or Ill	23	.34	3	.21	26	.32	*<.01	60	.20	91	.16	151	.17	*<.05	3	.13	10	.17	13	.16	>.05
I. Retired	114	1.69	39	2.77	153	1.88	*<.01	209	.71	810	1.40	1019	1.17	*<.01	18	.79	84	1.40	102	1.24	*<.01
J. Possible Elimination	6	.09	10	.71	16	.20	>.05	182	.62	556	.96	739	.85	*<.01	2	.09	36	.60	38	.46	*<.01
K. Asked to Resign	5	.07	0	-	5	.06	>.05	74	.25	74	.13	148	.17	>.05	6	.26	7	.12	13	.16	>.05
L. Other	32	.48	10	.71	42	.52	*<.01	339	1.12	651	1.12	990	1.13	*<.01	18	.79	78	1.30	96	1.16	*<.01
TOTALS	418		109		527			2358		5186		7544			139		578		717		
SAMPLE POOL TOTALS	6728		6408		8136			29,348		57,890		87,238			2268		5984		8252		

* Educators giving this reason for leaving a particular school system did not show up as an employee in another Illinois public school according to ISBE records.

*Significant at .05 or .01 or less than 5 chances or 1 chance in 100 that divergence in reasons for leaving between male and females can be explained as sampling fluctuations.

between males and females. More than two-thirds of the reasons for dropping out reported by the support personnel were also found to be significantly different in divergence of choice between males and females. For persons in administration, in the categories in which there were significant differences between males and females, the proportion of females selecting a particular reason for leaving was greatest. For persons in teaching, where there were significant differences between males and females among the reasons given for leaving, the proportion was greater for males. For support personnel, where there were significant differences between males and females, the proportion was greater for females selecting a particular reason for leaving.

Summary of Results: Teachers (8.6%) and support personnel (8.7%) had almost identical drop-out rates and these exceeded significantly the drop-out rate of administrators (5.8%). The difference in rate between high school (9.2%) and junior high school teachers (9.1%) was slight when compared to the elementary school teacher drop-out rate (7.9%). However, the difference between the elementary teachers' drop-out rate and that of the junior and senior high school teachers' drop-out rate was significant. The difference in drop-out rate between regular (8.5%) and special education (10.1%) classroom teachers was significant. Superintendents had a higher percentage of drop-outs (8.4%) when compared to assistant superintendents, principals, directors, business managers, and supervisors, but these were exceeded in percentage of drop-out by consultants (10.6%) and coordinators (9.4%). The percentage of support personnel leaving Illinois public schools was 8.7 percent with social workers having the highest (13.2%) drop-out rate. The lowest group was guidance counselors with a (5.8%) drop-out rate.

In all three classifications, administration, teaching, and support personnel, two-thirds or greater of the twelve reasons identified were found

to be significantly different between males and females. For administrators, there was a significant difference for five categories with female dominance compared to three categories for males. For the teachers there were significant differences for six reasons for male dominance and three reasons for female. For the support personnel there were significant differences for seven reasons for female dominance and one reason for male.